

~~[[ -]] assessing the~~ determining an amount of water absorbed by the load by subtracting the amount of free water from the amount of water supplied to the tub (F);

~~[[ -]]~~ estimating a specific absorption of the load based on the water absorbed and on the free water,

~~[[ -]]~~ calculating a load equivalent based on the specific absorption and on the amount of water absorbed by the load, ~~such the~~ the load equivalent being related to the load in the machine and being used for controlling the program thereof.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~characterised in that it~~ further ~~comprises~~ comprising the steps of:

~~[[ -]]~~ ~~assessing~~ determining the difference of water levels in predetermined time intervals,

~~[[ -]]~~ predicting future levels of water based on the ~~above-assessed~~ determined differences, ~~such the~~ the future levels being directly related to predicted amount of free water;

~~[[ -]]~~ estimating a predicted specific water absorption based on predicted amounts of free water;

~~[[ -]]~~ calculating predicted load equivalents based on such predicted future amounts of free water and said predicted specific water absorption (SA), and

~~[[ -]]~~ supplying an amount of water to the tub based on the above predicted load equivalents.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim 1, ~~or 2, characterised in that it~~ further ~~comprises~~ comprising the step of checking if the total amount of water supplied to the tub is higher than a predetermined value, and the step of alerting ~~[[the]]~~ a user accordingly.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of: ~~or 2, characterised in that it comprises the following steps, carried out before a washing cycle is started:~~

[[-]] filling a known water amount to the tub (T),  
 [[-]] measuring [[the]] a corresponding water level,  
 [[-]] storing [[the]] a difference value between a pressure reference value and the above measured value, and  
 [[-]] using the stored value for compensating the measure of the free water amount.

5. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to claim 1 ~~or 2, in which at least one spinning step is carried out, characterised in that~~ wherein [[the]] an increase in speed vs. time for reaching a final spinning speed is selected according to the water level measured, [[such]] the increase being lower when such water level is high.
6. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method according to claim 5, wherein the final spinning speed[[,]] is reached in two or more steps, ~~characterised in that~~ and the time interval (t, t') between said steps is determined according to the measured water level, [[such]] the time intervals being higher when the water level is high.
7. (Currently Amended) A washing machine, ~~having means (10) for determining the configured to determine an amount of water supplied to the machine, the washing machine comprising such means being connected to~~ a central processor unit (13) ~~of the machine, characterised in that it comprises~~ and a continuous water level sensor (12) connected to ~~such~~ the central processor unit (13), this latter being adapted to assess ~~the~~ determine an amount of water absorbed by ~~the~~ a load by subtracting the amount of free water from the amount of water supplied to the tub (T), to estimate a specific absorption of the load based on the water absorbed and on the free water, and to calculate a load equivalent based on the specific absorption and on the amount of water absorbed by the load, ~~such~~ the load equivalent being related to the load in the machine.

8. (Currently Amended) The washing machine according to claim ~~[[3]]~~ 7 ~~characterised in that its~~ wherein the central processor unit (13) is further capable of ~~assessing the~~ determining a difference of water levels in predetermined time intervals, predicting future levels of water based on the above ~~assessed~~ determined differences, such future levels being directly related to predicted amount of free water, estimating a predicted specific absorption based on predicted amounts of free water, calculating predicted load equivalents based on such predicted future amounts of free water and said predicted specific water absorption, and supplying an amount of water to the tub based on the above predicted load equivalents.
9. (Currently Amended) The washing machine according to claim ~~7 or 8~~, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the central processor unit (13) is provided with an alarm system that informs ~~[[the]]~~ a user when the pressure valve measured by the continuous water level sensor is not within a predetermined range of values.
10. (Currently Amended) The washing machine according to claim ~~7 or 8~~, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the central processor unit (13) is able to sum a predetermined number of consecutive pressure difference values measured by the continuous water level sensor, an alarm information being provided when such sum is below a predetermined value.
11. (Currently Amended) The washing machine according to claim ~~7 or 8~~, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the central processor unit (13) comprises an alarm system for detecting the trend of water level in the tub during washing and/or rinsing, the alarm system alerting ~~the~~ a user when the decrease of water level vs. time is higher than a predetermined value, this condition being indicative of a water leakage.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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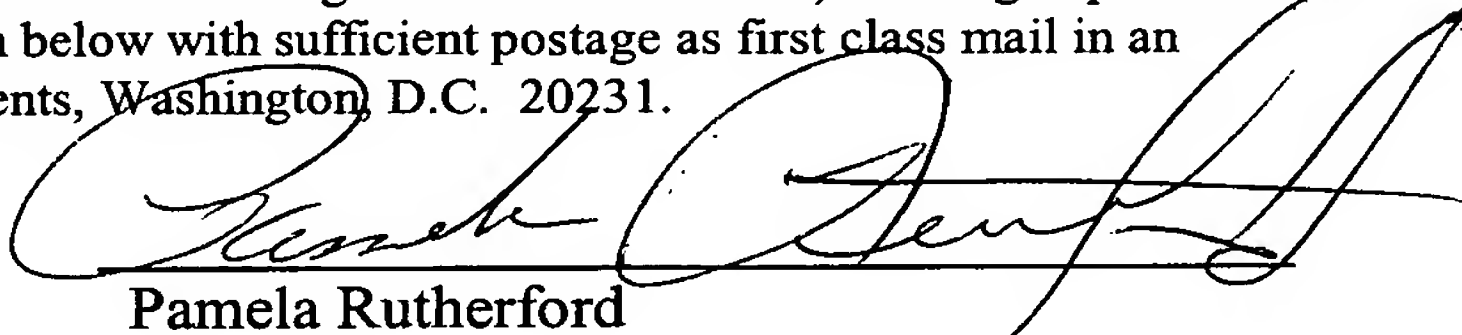
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